



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS**  
*COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS*

PASCO  
Public meeting  
March 13, 2004

**Roll Call:**

Commissioners present: Leo Gaeta, Yvonne Lopez-Morton, Gabriel Banfi, Faviola Barbosa, Homero Tamez, Gabriel Portugal, Rebecca Villareal, Karla Padilla-Reyna, and Gabriel Portugal.

Commissioners absent: Diana Avalos.

Staff present: Antonio M. Ginatta and Vita Echeverria

Meeting called to order at 9:20 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Minutes approved unanimously.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Emergent Issues Committee:**

Commissioner Banfi reported on the following priorities established by the Committee:

1. Racial Profiling - Many people throughout the state feel that they are still being racially profiled. This information conflict with the State Patrol's report on profiling. The committee will try to compile information on actual cases of profiling and present that to the WSP or legislators.
2. Immigration - Governor Locke has supported the Commission in acting on this extremely important federal issue.
3. L&I - Commissioner Tamez will be focusing on labor and injured worker issues.
4. Health - Chair Gaeta will update the rest of the Commission on this issue.

**Economic Development Committee:**

- Commissioner Villareal reported that the committee will be working on the planning of a potential future summit or workshop. They will be partnering with the Small Business Administration, county and city officials, CTED and OMWBE.

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**Personnel Committee:**

- Commissioner Lopez-Morton reported on the commissioner position available with the Commission. The efforts to recruit are statewide. Law enforcement officers and people with economic development experience are highly encouraged to apply.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Staff has distributed finalized administrative policies to each commissioner.

**Brewster High School Issue**

Commissioner Barbosa spoke about the CHA letter advising Principal Phillips. She mentioned that the principal had met with 30-40 parents to talk about the issue. The principal agreed to have diversity training for all educational staff. He will be having outside parties train the staff and community regarding gang violence.

Q-How will CHA try to resolve the gang problems from 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm, when students are not in school? How will CHA work with law enforcement and the mayor on this issue?

R- CHA has been focusing on the issues within the school, as they were asked by the community to intervene regarding the meeting held by Principal Phillips and the 27 Latino students. The CHA's primary responsibility was to advise the agency (Brewster High School) to work to resolve the treatment of Latinos by school staff.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Portugal made a motion to change the Spokane meeting from May 13/14 to May 20/21. Commissioner Tamez seconded the motion. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Commissioner Tamez met with Kennewick school administrators and students to help mediate an issue of harassment. He will continue to work on this issue and will be providing follow up information to the board. Commissioner Portugal asked to be exempted from this particular issue since he works with the school.

**GUEST SPEAKERS**

**Rodolfo Lucatero - Chair of Grupo Hispanos Unidos**

Wants to create leaders in the Hispanic communities by providing training. Schools need to involve the youth in projects throughout the community in order to have youth leadership programs. Other concerns were housing, renter rights, voter registration and educating the communities on how to vote. Mr. Lucatero also stated that the community needed to feel more secure.

**Sue Thorton – Dispute Resolution Center**

Works with many Latino couples offering an alternative in resolving their family situations. They also assist with landlord-tenant issues and co-worker disagreements. This program offers a safe and natural place for people to meet and come up with resolutions.

Q- Commissioner Lopez-Morton: Does the agency currently track information by ethnicity?

R- Not at this point, but they will be taking a look at that in the future.

**Captain Doug Chambers – Pasco Police Department**

The department has a program called Community Organized Policing (COP). The mission of the program is to improve the quality of life for Pasco residents. everyone. The department has worked to put a stop to “drug” houses, and have worked to decrease gang violence in the community.

The Hispanic community in the city is no longer afraid to communicate with the law enforcement. The department currently has 23% Hispanic officers.

Commissioners commended the department for having bilingual officers and for offering salary increases to bilingual officers.

**Ruben Lemos – Hispanic Achievement Award Program**

Thanked the commissioners for their work with the Pasco community and for being here today. In 1990, Lemos came up with an idea to recognize local Hispanic students. HAAP has given \$600,000 to graduating seniors since its inception. Through education, students can position ourselves to be professionals in the community. The program currently has 18 volunteer board members and they meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month.

Q- Are you collaborating with other groups or organizations through out the community?

R-They are working with many other groups; that’s how they are able to get their funding for scholarships. The HAAP will hold its Annual Program on May 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

Q-Are scholarships available to undocumented students?

R -Because the group is non-profit they are required to document and provide Social Security numbers. He will research the issue further and get back to the commissioners on this.

**Capt. Ed Seiner - Kennewick Police Department**

The Kennewick Police Department has 115 employees. Hispanic recruitment for the Department's Volunteer Program has been difficult. Most of their volunteers are seniors and they sometimes put in more time than the officers. The Department has implemented a Neighborhood Watch program.

**Gracie Valle – Pasco High School**

Ms. Valle is a Community Relations Specialist. She spoke about the Cinco de Mayo celebration taking place on May 1st. She is in need of volunteers for the event. It will be in conjunction with the grand opening of the Farmers Market.

**Rey Gomez – WSP – “El Protector” Program**

El Protector is a Hispanic Outreach program out of California, which has proven to be a success. Benton/Franklin Counties have decided to model the program, as there are a disproportionate number of Hispanic deaths on the highway. The program serves as a community support group to save lives. It is made up of several different officers from different law enforcement agencies. WSP is focused on working with all the media and they attend all Hispanic events to generate awareness about the program.

**Veronica Yzquierdo – Pasco Downtown Development Association**

The Pasco Downtown Development Association focuses on enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by:

- rehabilitating historic buildings;
- encouraging supportive new construction;
- developing sensitive design management systems; and
- long-term planning.

The Economic Restructuring Committee strengthens the district's existing economic base while finding ways to expand it to meet new opportunities from outlying development. The Promotion Committee markets the traditional commercial district's assets to customers, potential investors, new businesses, local citizens and visitors.

Ms. Yzquierdo is seeking volunteers and will be try trying to get interns to work with their association.

**David Cortinas - Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**

The Chamber currently has about 100 members. They are the largest Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in the state. They are also helping other communities start their own chambers.

**Raul Diaz – Hispanic Republican Party**

Mr. Diaz is the Chair of the Hispanic Republican Party. Mr. Diaz has collaborated with the WSU Latino Outreach; together they have developed and sponsored citizenship classes for Hispanic immigrants in the Tri-Cities. The citizenship classes have been a great success and more Hispanics are attending and learning not only how to be a good citizen but a good American citizen.

**Omar Sanchez – Graduate from Pasco High School**

Discussed his involvement with MeChA. MeChA aims to promote higher education within the Hispanic community, not just students but parents.

**Liz Padilla Flynn – Pasco School District**

Ms. Padilla Flynn oversees the District's bilingual program. Talked about the Dual Language instruction program. Pasco School District has been looking at primary instruction in the student's home language from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Students learn at a higher level when there are in the dual language program.

**Brian Robinson – Mayor Benton City**

Mr. Robinson reported he did not agree with the Hispanic community having a separate Hispanic Chamber of Commerce because he wanted Hispanics to join the current and existing Chamber of Commerce. However, he did acknowledge that there was prejudice in his community that created a sense of none belonging for Hispanics and he was making every effort to change his community and as he continued to learn about why and how the Hispanic community is making changes so they can be included in city government, he learned about the importance of meeting with Hispanic leaders and now better understands the importance of how the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce can help both Hispanics and the Benton City community grow and work together.

Meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.